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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL ITEM IN THE AGENDA OF THE FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE TO ALLEVIATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR IN CROATIA AND TO FACILITATE ITS RECOVERY

Letter dated 27 August 1992 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Croatia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit herewith the request, in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly of the United Nations, that an additional item be included in the agenda of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, entitled "International cooperation and assistance to alleviate the consequences of war in Croatia and to facilitate its recovery".

In accordance with the provisions of rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum concerning this request is attached to the present communication (annex).

We would be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Ambassador Dr. Mario NOBILO
Acting Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Croatia
to the United Nations

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ANNEX

Explanatory memorandum

The war in the Republic of Croatia, as a result of an aggression by Serbian insurgents and the so-called "Yugoslav People's Army - JNA", started in late June 1991. It increased in intensity and in terms of loss of lives and material destruction, as well as in creating extreme impact on the environment. The major military operations came to a halt during January 1992, when a fragile and unbalanced cease-fire had been reached. In spite of that fact, attacks against specific cities and regions in Croatia have continued (Osijek, Zadar, Dubrovnik, ...) and are continuing even today (Slavonski Brod).

Four areas in the Republic of Croatia have been submitted to the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The deployment of UNPROFOR has gradually diminished the number of attacks and consequently brought relative peace to those regions. UNPROFOR has helped in the continuing efforts of the Croatian Government to restore law and order through the Republic of Croatia and has to be commended for its efforts and bravery. However, UNPROFOR is not capable of resolving three major problems Croatia is facing: the heavy burden of human casualties, material destruction, and the tide of refugees and displaced persons.

I. HUMAN CASUALTIES

The toll in human lives, as the result of unprovoked assault and consequent aggression against the Republic of Croatia, has been tremendous. According to the official data of the Croatian Red Cross and Croatian Army Headquarters, more than 20,000 people have been wounded and 4,200 have died as the result of military operations. One has to take into account that all the data is not available, since many atrocities committed in the occupied territory of the Republic of Croatia have not yet been examined by the officials of the Croatian Government. However, the total number of missing persons (both MIAs and civilians) is estimated to exceed 18,000 - almost all of them presumed dead. There is a great number of prisoners (both civilians and military personnel) who are still held in POW camps and detention centres established by the aggressor.

Owing to the fact that, as a result of the war, there are many permanently disabled persons, many orphaned children and many families that have lost their bread-winner, the cost that Croatian society has to meet in this aspect is far greater than the resources available.

II. MATERIAL DESTRUCTION

Although official data concerning the war damage are not yet available, owing to the grave post-war condition, the total war damage of the Republic of Croatia is estimated in the range of US$ 40 billion.

The aggressor has targeted the cities that have no military significance in order to destroy the industrial potential of Croatia. The Croatian economy has been severely damaged so that the gross national product (GNP) will be just a fraction of the pre-war level. Several cities have been heavily damaged and many villages totally destroyed. The loss of housing units is measured in hundreds of thousands. On the eve of the forthcoming winter, it is of the utmost importance to provide accommodation and humanitarian assistance to the people left without their homes.

Many priceless monuments of cultural heritage have been severely damaged or completely destroyed. The environment has been attacked and heavily endangered as well.

Communication lines have been destroyed, not only as the result of the military operations in the Ceratin area, but also in a planned and pre-meditated manner. As an example, one can name the extreme damage of the airports in Dubrovnik and Zadar, major tourist areas in Croatia. Among the more than 30 bridges completely destroyed is the bridge on the Zdrilo strait near Maslenica, which constitutes the only link between the continental part of the country with its southern coastal region. The railroad system suffered extensive damages, with more than 1,000 km of railroad tracks inoperable.

III. REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

The Republic of Croatia has been overflowing with refugees and displaced persons, coming both from the occupied parts of Croatia and from the neighbouring Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croatia provides the food, medical assistance and accommodation for more than 270,000 displaced persons originating from Croatia, in addition to 360,000 refugees (mostly Moslems and Croats of Bosnian citizenship) coming from the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This creates a tremendous economic burden for Croatia, which has simply no resources to provide effective assistance for all the people in need.

While it is necessary to provide direct financial and material assistance to meet the immediate demands created by the devastation of the war, further measures must also be undertaken to rebuild and stabilize the Croatian economy. This can only be achieved by the reconstruction of economic facilities, housing units and communication and transportation lines.

It is important that this be accomplished as soon as possible because a strong and stable economy will not only be able to meet the needs of the population of Croatia but will also be a source of peace and stability in the region.

Croatia deems it essential that it be granted "Disaster area status", and that all appropriate and necessary assistance be provided by the international community as soon as possible. Therefore, we would appreciate if this proposed agenda item: "International cooperation and assistance to alleviate the consequences of war in Croatia and to facilitate its recovery" be included within the first 30 agenda items of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.